

**IN THE SPECIFICATION**

*Kindly replace paragraph 21 as follows:*

[0021] It is a further object of the invention to provide the bacterium as described in the preceeding paragraphs, wherein the aspartate aminotransferase gene comprises the following DNA (a) or (b):

(a) a DNA which comprises a nucleotide sequence of the nucleotides 1 to ~~1196~~1191 in SEQ ID NO: 1; or

(b) a DNA which is hybridizable with a nucleotide sequence of the nucleotides 1-~~1196~~1191 in SEQ ID NO:1, or a probe which can be prepared from the nucleotide sequence under the stringent conditions and codes for a protein having an activity of aspartate aminotransferase.